

27 December 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion by Dr. Hilger on "Great Russians and the Ethnic Minorities", 23 December 1950.

MINORITIES, DISC.

1. As a preface to this discussion, Dr. Hilger called attention to his lecture of 15 June on the situation encountered by the Germans when they invaded the Ukraine in 1941 and their failure to exploit their favorable reception.

2. While it is true that many of the factors existing among the various Russian minority groups in those days are still capable of favorable exploitation by the US, it must be realized that conditions have changed. The character and construction of these ethnic groups have been considerably altered because: (a) of the continued predominance of the Great Russians over all other minorities; (b) annihilation of previous collaborators, and (c) resettlement and absorption of minority groups in other areas, and (d) present inaccessibility of minority groups to outside influence and propaganda due to iron curtain controls.

3. In connection with the above points, it must be remembered that when the Germans invaded Russia, these groups strongly hoped and believed that there was a good chance the enemy would free them from a regime which they hated, but after their unfortunate experience with the Germans, and as a result of constant Soviet propaganda and lack of outside information, their attitude has considerably changed.

4. Any attempt to exploit these groups today must be carefully handled. It must be realized that these groups have many divergent views and while they may all react favorably to certain approaches, other approaches or policies may offend one group yet please another.

5. All minority groups, including the Great Russians, are mutually dissatisfied with the following and would probably react favorably if properly approached.

- (a) Collectivism of agriculture.
- (b) Regimentation of industrial workers; i.e. denial of freedom to select employment.
- (c) Desire for peace; i.e., the Soviets continually paint the U.S. as an aggressor, whereas the U.S. must reverse this propaganda. Hilger admits, however, that he is not optimistic in penetrating the iron curtain with propaganda.

8. It should

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6. It should also be recognized that the Great Russians are proud of their dominant position in the government, both under the Czar and the Soviets. This has caused considerable resentment among other groups.

7. All groups are united in giving credit to the Soviets for creating the unification of the present Russian state, and because of this are willing to overlook many defects in the Soviet system. In view of this attitude, the U.S. should pursue a neutral policy with regard to any dismemberment of the USSR. The answer might be a policy of self-determination which would probably be acceptable to all groups. Such a policy, however, must be handled with great care, otherwise the Russian people will suspect that behind such a policy we intend to dismember their country.

8. Hilger closed with an interesting theory — that if the pressure becomes too strong between East and West, Stalin might offer to stay out of the Western Hemisphere in return for the U.S. giving him a free hand in the rest of the world. This would probably appeal to many Americans in the light of Hoover's recent speech. Stalin could then take his time in consolidating his area and complete the domination of the rest of the world at his leisure.

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